

New York State Soil & Water Conservation Committee  
July 2016

**NYS SWCC News**

**SWCC Meeting:** The last SWCC meeting was held on June 21<sup>st</sup> in Albany. Two new members were introduced: Ronald Montessi, from Warren County is the new NYACD representative and Darin Hickling, of Otsego County is the new Farm Bureau Representative. Welcome aboard!

- The Round 22 AGNPS Ranked List was reviewed and approved by the State Committee. The ranked list has been passed onto the Commissioner's Office for approval.
- The next meeting is scheduled to convene at 10AM on Tuesday, July 19<sup>th</sup>, 2016. The meeting will take place at the State Office Building located in Utica, NY. A meeting agenda will be sent out.

**AEM Program**

- **AEM Year 11:** As a reminder, AEM Base Year 11 Close Out Materials are due on July 7<sup>th</sup>. The information on close-out of AEM Year 11 (2015-2016) Program was emailed in March. Again this year, Districts will be able to self-certify. The required information and forms are available on the SWCC SharePoint site.
- **AEM Fruit and Vegetable Farm Training**, below: room costs will be covered by the State Committee / Ag and Markets for all participants. Stay tuned for more details.
  - The New York State Soil and Water Conservation Committee is planning an AEM Tier 2 Training for vegetable and fruit farms to be conducted in Cobleskill, NY (Schoharie County) starting at 10:00 a.m. on August 2nd and concluding at 1:00 p.m. on August 3rd. The tentative agenda contains a discussion about the key elements of vegetable and small fruit production including site selection, water quality and quantity, crop and variety selection. On day one, we will also be introducing concepts of the USDA Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and New York State Grown and Certified Programs. The balance of the two day training will be in the field both days identifying and assessing resource concerns using AEM Tier 2 Worksheets. As of now, the plan will be to visit a vegetable (fresh produce) farm on August 2nd and an apple orchard on August 3rd. Experts in the fields of vegetable and fruit production as well as the AEM Framework will be on hand throughout the two day training. Please save the date now and discuss this opportunity with your District Boards. More details to follow. In the meantime, questions can be directed to Greg Albrecht or Lauren Prezorski.

**AGNPS Program**

**65% Advancement Payments:** The AGNPS Guidance Manual (page 39) states that cover letters should be included with the 65% Claim for Payment, however, this requirement has not been strictly enforced in the past. Due to a recent payment audit by the OSC, we will now be making sure that cover letters are included with each 65% BMP Claim for Payment. The cover letter should demonstrate that the project is under construction, projects have gone out for bid, etc and the funds being requested will be used very soon.

**Close-outs and Final Reports:** As described in Attachment D of each Ag NPS contract, final reports must be submitted no later than 60 days after the end of the contract. Please make an effort to close out expired, past due contracts as soon as possible. If you have contracts that will be expiring

within the next 6 months that will need additional time, please work with your AEA to seek a Time Extension as soon as possible. Time Extension have to be approved by the SWCC and the OSC and there are no guarantees that will happen so you will want to know before your contract runs out.

**Round 22 Update:** With returns from the AGNPS and AEM programs, funds available have risen from \$11.1 million to \$13.1 million. As mentioned above, the ranked list is in the Commissioner's office for approval and release.

**AGNPS Tip of the Month #6:** When making amendment requests, specifically, time extensions, please include as much detail as possible regarding the need for the extension so the Committee can make informed decisions. Having a thorough explanation would also deter questions from the OSC should they review any no-cost time extension requests. Additionally, Districts should be submitting a formal written justification (i.e. cover letter) in addition to the amendment form explaining the need for the time extension.

#### **Other Upcoming Events**

- Wednesday, August 10<sup>th</sup> is the annual **Conservation Farm Equipment Walk through the Empire Farm Days'** grounds (<http://empirefarmdays.com>), Seneca Falls, NY. This annual event is led by SWCD, NRCS, and Ag and Markets/State Committee staff to help improve knowledge and familiarity with farm equipment, including tillage, planting/seeding, manure management, and cover cropping implements. Be on the lookout for registration details in the near future.
- The **NYS Soil Health Workgroup and Empire Farm Days** will be offering soil health seminars, tours, and demonstrations at the Soil Health Center at Empire Farm Days, August 9, 10, and 11 (<http://empirefarmdays.com>), Seneca Falls, NY. Look for more information in the coming weeks and encourage colleagues and producers to check it out.
- **NYACD Annual Meeting and Administrative Conference** will be held on October 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> in Syracuse at the Crowne Plaza Hotel. Details on registration will be forthcoming from NYACD.

#### **Funding Opportunities**

- **DEC WQIP and Engineering Grants:** The DEC is accepting applications for the [Water Quality Improvement Project \(WQIP\) program](#) and the [Engineering Planning Grant](#). These grants are part of the [NYS Regional Economic Development Councils Consolidated Funding Application \(CFA\)](#). The WQIP program has \$25.9 million available and the Engineering Planning Grant has up to \$2 million available. [Multiple workshops](#) are being held where presentations will be given on both grant programs. **All CFA applications must be completed by July 29, 2016 at 4:00 PM.**